of clear police verification reports as on date at Passport Offices in Kerala (Kozhikode, Cochin & Trivandrum) are 55, 996 (Fifty five thousand nine hundred and ninety six).

(b) The average time taken to issue a fresh passport in these offices is approximately 40-45 days. However, passports under Tatkal scheme are being issued within 3 days; passports of minors issued within 15 days and renewal/reissue passports within 30 days.

(c) The pendancy is largely due to short supply of blank passport booklets from the Indian Security Press, Nashik. The matter is being followed up with the concerned authorities. As soon as normalcy is restored in respect of supply of blank passport booklets, steps like working in shifts, will be taken to bring back the pendancy position to the barest minimum possible.

Discussion on Iran with US President

1716. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that issue of Iran nuclear was discussed with US President during Prime Minister's visit there in September, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what has been India's stand thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Iran's nuclear issue came up for discussion with the US President during Prime Minister's recent visit to New York in September, 2005.

(b) Prime Minister and US President exchanged views on the issue of Iran's nuclear programme and the consultations in progress at the IAEA in Vienna at that time. The Prime Minister conveyed the importance of engaging in intensive diplomatic efforts to evolve an international consensus on this issue.

(c) India's stand remains unchanged on this issue. India continues to believe that a way could be found to reconcile Iran's need for nuclear energy for its development with the international community's concern over proliferation. India supports keeping the door open for dialogue and consensus and avoidance of confrontation. India is opposed to the matter

being referred to the UN Security Council, and believes that International community needs to keep Iran engaged in a dialogue to resolve the issue. India welcomes the cooperation that Iran has been extending to the IAEA to enable it to fulfill its mandate.

Agreement with IAEA

1717. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US administration has stipulated that India sign a more restrictive safeguard agreement with IAEA than other nuclear weapon States including US has done;

(b) whether India has made any alteration on its stated stand on this issue;

(c) if so, details thereto; and

(d) the response of Government to the US stand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The US administration has not stipulated that India sign a more restrictive safeguard agreement with IAEA than other nuclear weapon States including US have done.

(b) and (c) India has not made any alteration to its stated stand.

(d) During the meeting of the Working Group on Nuclear issue on 21 October 2005, it was made clear to the US side that the only frame work was the July 18, 2005 understanding: that Congressional concerns could not lead to any change of goal posts; that India's benefits and advantages would be the same as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technologies such as the United States; and that we will place voluntarily our civilian nuclear facilities under safeguards and would negotiate an Additional Protocol.

Simplification of Passport form

1718. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have not been able to design simple passport application form;